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## Grouting contract awarded for Corps' Mill Creek Dam

**Walla Walla, Wash., --** A \$1.1 million contract was awarded today to control seepage under the Mill Creek Dam, according to a dam safety expert from the Walla Walla District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The contract was awarded to Jensen Drilling Company of Eugene, Ore. Construction workers are expected to begin staging equipment and materials by late August and finish the job in January 2002. The grouting work will occur along the roadway on the upstream side of the dam. The road will remain open and recreation access will not be affected.

"We're going to put in a grout curtain under the right side of the dam where we've seen some sinkholes since the floods in late winter of 1996," said Everett Wright, dam safety program coordinator in the District's engineering division. "Mill Creek is a safe dam and we're going to make sure it stays that way. The work we're going to have done will close up any gaps that would allow water to erode and create openings under the dam."

The work will include drilling a line of four-inch diameter holes across part of the dam totaling more than 17,000 feet of vertical drilling and pumping a water and cement mixture under pressure to construct the grout curtain.

Mill Creek Dam was completed in 1940. Dam safety inspectors have noted that seepage has been a problem since the reservoir was filled the first time in 1941. Following the 1996 reservoir filling, several sinkholes developed in the reservoir area and near the right abutment. These sinkholes indicated that water was passing through some areas of the right abutment.

"We did some test grouting at Mill Creek Dam in 1999 to determine where seepage was occurring and if a grout curtain could be constructed to control it. Information from the testing was used to develop this contract," said Wright.

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